

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY**

INFORMANTS: NAZIR GAGINE, LEONA GAGINE, UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

INTERVIEWER: PETER MOREAU

DATE: 1988

NG = NAZAIR GAGINE

LG = LEONA GAGINE

UW = UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN

M = PETER MOREAU

SG-BV-T113A

[there is a whooshing noise throughout the entire tape, and Mr. Gagine seems to be at some distance from the recorder, making it often very difficult or impossible to understand him]

M: (- -) Concerning the village of Albion. Uh, first question is, can you tell me how long you've lived in Albion?

NG: Since nineteen, I was born in 1936.

M: And you've always lived here? And you've (- -)

LG: And I've been here since 1949. We got married in 1949.

M: Okay. And where did you live before you were, before you were married?

LG: I lived in Woonsocket. I come from Canada, but I lived in Woonsocket. (M: Um hm)
For a year.

M: Where in Canada?

LG: Uh, Granby.

M: Okay. And did your, did your parents come from Canada? Where, where in (- -)

NG: Ste. Jean de [unclear].

M: Okay. And why did, why did they come here?

NG: [unclear] find work. They worked in the, wo-, she had to work in the (- -)

M: Textile mill. (LG: Yeah) Yeah. Uhh, any idea when they came?

NG: In nineteen, 1914, during the war here. (M: Oh)

LG: Before the war. (M: What) In 1921.

M: What had they been doing in Canada? Fo-, for work before they came here?

NG: They were on the farm.

M: They were on a farm. [pause: 5 sec.] Does that mean life was better here in e-, in, in the mill than compared to the farm?

LG: [loud noise in the background] They were making money.

NG: That's the only place they could find employment.

M: Is that right? And, and why did you come here? To, to Woonsocket first?

LG: Well, uh, my mother, I don't know, it's, it was nineteen four-, my mother was li-, my mother was born in United States. And she went to Canada in 1920, and she met my father and they got married.

UW: She live over here.

LG: She met in him in uh (- -)

UW: My father came up here, she didn't go there. He can't gets the work up here, he got my mother to marry her, and then they le-, five kids.

LG: She'll tell you more about it.

UW: After they had five kids they left America and they went to Canada. That's why I'm American.

LG: They went back in 1920.

UW: Well they had five kids. Most of the people [unclear] than that. I was born 1917. July.

M: So you were born here.

UW: I was born in New Bedford.

LG: I was born in Canada. [Mrs. Gagine and interviewer talk at once; both unclear]

M: They went back and forth.

LG: She had my, my [unclear]. Jenna, Elizabeth (- -)

UW: And then Arthur and me.

NG: They were born over here.

UW: Yeah. That's all. [both informants talk and laugh; unclear]

M: Okay, then, and then did your parents, what kind of work did your parents do in the uh textile mill?

NG: My father was a, a, spinning room. (M: Yeah) They were both in the spinning room. My mother was a spinner. He was a, they, [unclear] section there. [unclear].

LG: He was a boss. (M:Oh) [unclear] boss. (M: Oh) With a third hand.

M: Third hand, is that what you call that?

LG: Yeah. [chuckles]

M: So it was a type, type of boss.

LG: He fixed, he fixed the loom. He fixed them, the, wherever she was leaking.

NG: In the spinning room. (M: Yeah)

LG: Spinning room. He works there.

M: Any idea how much they were paid when they, when they first came?

NG: Oh thirty-seven cents an hour then. (M: Is that right?)

M: And did you ever work there?

NG: Yes I did.

M: How much, how much did you get paid?

NG: Fifty-seven cents an hour.

M: When?

NG: Sixteen dollars a week.

M: When was that?

NG: 1942.

M: 1942. Quite a difference in what people get today. (LG: Yeah) Did they have a, did they have a union there? [response not audible] No union? They never did?

NG: They were, they did, but I [unclear].

M: In other words they had a union after you we-, after you left.

NG: [unclear].

LG: Yeah, TWA.

M: Textile Workers of America?

LG: Yeah.

M: Were there ever any strikes or anything?

NG: [unclear].

M: Okay what were, were the hours that people worked there the same as people work today?

NG: Six o'clock [unclear] eight hours. (M: Eight hours?) Six o'clock [unclear].

M: So a-, it went right around the clock. (LG: Yeah) Okay. Uhh, how were the conditions in the mill?

NG: Well they used to call them sweat box.

LG: The sweat box. [laughs]

M: Why?

NG: It was hot.

LG: The sweat, the sweat box.

M: Why was it, why was it so hot?

LG: Because they didn't have any (- -)

NG: They need humidity to put up, for the yarn. [unclear].

M: How do they, how do they get the humidity?

NG: They've got those uh (- -)

LG: The steam.

NG: Steam pipes?

M: Yeah.

NG: They get the, make the valve pop.

M: You mean like sprinklers?

NG: Sprinklers. (M: Yeah, yeah)

M: And they had those going all the time? [response inaudible] And how did, that would, that would get water, but how did the (- -)

NG: Up the steam pipes and [unclear] all the others break.

M: They would break if it was dry?

NG: If it was [unclear] dry. Yeah. But they wouldn't let them open the window.

M: They wouldn't let them open the window.

NG: [unclear]. (M: Oh)

M: So the windows were always closed. How did they, how did they stop them from opening the windows?

NG: Well they had a [foreman - unclear], and they'd do it by themselves because they knew they'd work hard on it. [unclear] break. [unclear].

M: They would break if it was, [Mar. Gagine clears throat] if it was dry you mean?

NG: [unclear].

LG: It had to be damp in there, or (- -)

M: Damp, and, and warm, too.

LG: Yeah.

M: So it was, so it must have been a tough place to work.

NG: [unclear].

M: Yeah.

LG: He didn't like it. (M: No) [unclear] quit.

M: When you, when you left you, you left because you were getting more money someplace else?

NG: [unclear].

M: Was it easier work or what, I mean was it, was, was it a sweat shop, too?

NG: No, they had air conditioning there.

M: Oh, oh, so it must have been quite a difference. [pause: 5 sec.] Okay when you, when you were born where did, where did you live? Was it this hou- (- -)

LG: In your house. [laughs]

M: Is that right? Is that right?

NG: I was born there and I lived on School Street. 122 School Street. (M: Yeah) [unclear]. I was born in [unclear].

M: [unclear].

LG: He was born in the house you, the house you live in.

M: Oh, I live on Main Street.

LG: Yeah, he was born on, [all talk; interviewer and Mr. Gagine unclear] in that house you were, (M: In that house, oh) that uh house he lived in. What side? On the right side?

M: Right as you face it, yeah.

LG: It was on the left side.

M: Yeah. Where Mrs. (- -)

LG: Where Mrs. [unclear] lives.

M: Where Mrs. [unclear] lives now. How much, I don't know if you remember wha-, when you [interviewer and Mr. Gagine talk; unclear] far back, what would the, what did they pay for rent?

NG: Two twenty-five a week.

M: Two twenty-five a week. Always by the week?

LG: Yeah. We u-, we used to live upstairs, when we got married. We pay a dollar and a quarter a week.

M: Upstairs where?

LG: On the third floor where my aunt lives.

M: Where's, on School Street?

LG: You know the, the house he just uh, white house there?

M: On the corner, yeah.

LG: We used to live on the third floor. (M: Is that right?) A dollar and a quarter a week. (M: Um hm) [chuckles]

M: How many rooms was it?

NG: Three.

LG: We had, we had two to start. (M: Yeah) And then we went to three rooms.

M: Now was that, was that owned by the mill still, or was that privately owned?

LG: My aunt, my aunt bought it. (M: Oh I see)

M: When did the, when did she buy that?

LG: 1949.

M: She bought it in 1949? (LG: Yeah, 19) The mill owned it up until then?

LG: Yeah. [pause: 3 sec.] She paid, she paid uh I think four, five, eight thousand, or something like that. (M: Yeah)

M: A lot less than it would be today.

LG: It's worth more today.

M: A lot more, I'm sure.

LG: Oh yeah.

M: Did the, when they sold the houses, did they just, just sell them to people who were working in the mill, or did they sell to anybody?

NG: They had first choice.

LG: Yeah.

M: People in the mill? Was it mostly people in the mill who bought them?

LG: Yeah.

M: What did, when you, when you were born what did, what did most people do for transportation?

NG: They walked.

LG: They walk. [chuckles]

M: Really?

LG: Walk the track.

M: There weren't many cars then.

NG: Uh huh. My cousin used to take the [unclear].

LG: [unclear].

M: Oh that's your cousin?

LG: Yeah. And it goes with my cousin.

M: Oh I didn't know that. (LG: Yeah) Okay.

LG: Yeah. Well there, well there's my aunt. (M: Oh) That's my mother-in-law's n-, sister. (M: Oh, oh) Yeah. They're almost all rela-, related. (M: Hm)

M: And what did eh, what did people do for entertainment?

NG: They'd go to baseball field on Sunday, watch baseball.

M: Which is the same place where the field is, is now yeah.

LG: And they had the, what did they have? A, a, a band or something? On Main (- -)

NG: [unclear] a brass band.

LG: On Main Street.

M: An Albion brass band?

LG: Yeah.

M: And whe-, where did they play?

NG: Near [unclear].

LG: They had a big eh, like eh, what do you call, the gazebo? (M: Yeah) Or something? (M: Yeah) They played the band in there, and everybody would go there. [unclear].

M: So the, most of the people in the village went to, went to see that.

LG: Yeah. (M: Wasn't) There weren't too many [unclear], you know, too many houses. (M: Yeah) It was, it was (- -) The brick house and (- -)

M: Yeah. When did they build these houses in this, in this plot?

LG: Nine- (- -)

NG: 1948

LG: 1948. (M: Yeah) We bought in [unclear]. We bought from my cousin. He's the one that lives over there. (M: Oh yeah) Ambrose.

M: Oh, he used to live here?

LG: Yeah. We bought it from him. (M: Oh)

M: And then he moved to (- -)

LG: He move, he move about five times before he came back here.

M: Does he live with his mother there now?

LG: His mo-, his mother's on one side and he's on the other. She lives alone.

M: Oh, she lives alone?

LG: My aunt lives alone.

M: Even though she's blind she lives alone.

LG: Yeah. She's alone. (M: She li-) They, they have a rope at night. That's what they told me. They put a rope next to her bed from the, to the bathroom. Then from the bathroom she comes back to her bed. (M: Oh really) She can walk around in the house without nothing, (M: Yeah) because she knows where all the furniture is.

M: She lives on the second floor. (LG: On the second floor) And he does too? (LG: Yeah) On, but on the other side.

LG: They're both, you know, they're both, they're aside of each other. (M: Hm) So my s-, my cousin takes care of her. That's my cousin. (M: Yeah)

M: What, where did people do their shopping?

NG: Down in the store, in the market. And (- -)

M: Where's, where's the market?

LG: It used to (- -)

NG: Where the laundromat is.

M: Where the laundromat is.

LG: Yeah. It used to be a, a store there. Eh, what's the name of it?

NG: [unclear].

LG: [unclear].

NG: [unclear] on this side where the store is today? (M: Yeah) Used to have a IGA market there.

M: Oh there was an IGA? [Mrs. Gagine chuckles] When did the, when did the store, the one where the laundromat is now, when did that leave?

LG: That was Minot [unclear]. Minot had it. Norman Minot. Yeah. Oh that's a long time ago.

M: Do you recall, I mean was it here when you came?

LG: Yeah.

M: W-, the store was still here?

LG: Yeah, I used to buy from Minot. (M: Yeah) Yeah.

M: So when did he, like in the nineteen fifties or sometime did he leave?

LG: Um, nineteen, sixty, sixty-five. (M: Yeah) Something like that.

M: Okay what about the, like shopping for clothes and that kind of thing. Where would be the (- -)

LG: The guy used to come around. [Mr. Gagine talks in background; unclear] Was an, an old man that used to come and sell. [Mr. Gagine continues talking; unclear]

NG: And a truck.

M: And he used to just come through the village?

LG: Yeah. He'd sell clothes.

M: And most of the people used to buy from him?

LG: Yeah. And then there was a guy that used to come with neckties. (M: Yeah) He used to sell neckties. Oh, and all [unclear].

M: Was that a different person?

LG: Yeah, different guy.

M: Where did he come from?

LG: They call him the neck-,

NG: Woonsocket. (M: Yeah)

LG: Necktie, necktie man. [chuckles] They [unclear]. And then there was a guy that used to come with a, with a truck. He used to come and sell the meat in Albion.

M: And w-, from, from Woonsocket? [both talk; unclear]

LG: From Manville. (M: From Manville, Manville) Yeah. He used to come with the truck. He used to take orders, go back to his store and come back and give it to all the (- -) He used to work on the truck. (M: Oh yeah?) [unclear].

M: You used to work on the truck from, from Manville? [Mrs. Gagine chuckles]

NG: Roy [unclear] business.

M: Who is the, who is the present owner?

LG: [unclear]? No. I don't remember the name. [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine and another person conduct a conversation that is inaudible]

M: And what, what did you, you go to Manville and get on the truck and then come back here? Is (- -)

NG: No, we'd wait for him at the corner. We don't go there [unclear].

M: Just in Albion?

LG: Yeah. [unclear].

M: And how, were you young when you did that? [response inaudible]

LG: He work hard all his life you know. (M: Yeah) [chuckles]

M: He must have. So what y-, what would you do that, like after school?

NG: Before school and after school.

M: Before school, too. What time did you start? [Mrs. Gagine chuckles]

NG: Six o'clock.

M: Six o'clock, huh?

LG: They make five cents, ten cents for going. [chuckles] Or they give them a soda. (M: Hm) They always [unclear].

M: How, since, this is for both of you, since you've lived here how, how do think the village has changed?

LG: Quite a bit. I told him he used to go run in the woods. He got lost a few times. [chuckles]

NG: [unclear] more woods.

LG: He used to go that, they used to call it Ben Wood.

M: Where? Oh where, where [unclear] is?

LG: Ben Wood, Ben's Wood. We used to go there and go uh, go uh, [Mr. Gagine talks: unclear] go there and (- -) That was the cornfield.

M: Behind the, behind the ballfield?

LG: Yeah.

M: You mean where Nick's (- -)

LG: That was cornfield.

M: Where Nick's (- -)

LG: There was no corn. Everybody we, you'd go over there and make a corn garden or something. Everybody from the village they had a, each a corn (- -) [buzzer sounds] Oh that's my [unclear].

[tape stops momentarily]

M: Put it back on huh. The cornfield is where? Lincoln Street?

LG: Yeah. Yeah, they used to take all the corn there. They u-, their kids used to go play in there.

M: Who owned the, who owned the cornfield?

NG: [unclear].

LG: Mitris owned the cornfield.

NG: Now it's uh, before it was Chase. A-, Albion Mill. [interviewer coughs]

M: The Albion Mill owned it. The first time.

NG: Yeah. Houses.

M: Yeah. Ohhoh, that was all theirs. Yeah.

LG: The cow pasture.

M: And Ben's Woods was what, w-, Newman? Is it?

NG: Yeah.

M: Okay. That's, which is at the, like the far end of [unclear].

NG: Of [unclear].

LG: Yeah.

M: Yeah. When did they, do you remember when they put the golf course [unclear]?

NG: That'd be in 1940.

M: Forty?

LG: [unclear].

M: Um hm. [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine talk; unclear] What about the old, older part of the village here, like uh you know Main Street, School Street, how was that changed?

NG: Well they built all these houses here.

M: In Berkshire? Right.

LG: [unclear].

M: Any other changes?

NG: There's [unclear] school.

M: Well, that leads me to another question. What (- -) [clears throat] Now, did, I know there was a public school and a Catholic school here. Which, which one did you go to?

NG: We used to go, I used to go Catholic schools, and (- -)

LG: His mother would change him.

NG: And when there was a holiday we'd go to public schools.

LG: They change school all the time. (M: Oh yeah)

M: How come you change all the time?

LG: His mother used to. [pause: 5 sec.] When she had trouble [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine talk; unclear]

NG: Like politics. (M: Oh)

LG: She had trouble with the nuns, she'd send him to public school, remember?

NG: Yeah, [unclear] holiday up there, well we'd go there for the ho-, the holiday.

LG: They change days. [chuckles] (M: Hm)

M: So, was one supposed to be a better school than the other one or were they (- -)

NG: I rather have the nuns.

M: Why?

NG: Any time (- -) Huh?

M: Why? [both talk; interviewer unclear]

NG: They run better. They run better the nuns.

M: You think so?

NG: Oh yeah.

[someone says something inaudible]

LG: You know, when they used to go to the Catholic school, they learn the right way, and you know, it's not because they were nuns but, they used to teach and teach them (- -) They took time for the kids.

NG: [unclear] discipline [unclear].

LG: You know? They took time for the kids. The kids would learn. They, they, you know how the kids learn to sing? They used to learn the school, their l-, all, everything by singing. (M: Oh really?) You know. All their, their verbs and, and uh the adjectives. They used to learn that by singing. That, that's the way I learned, too. (M: Oh really?) And I reme-, I still remember from Canada the song we used to sing.

UW: [interrupts] [unclear] they know nothing in school the public.

LG: I or I (- -)

UW: We used to, they used to ask you who, who discovered eh, eh, eh Montreal. Who discovered Quebec. Well they learn nothing! [unidentifies woman and Mrs. Gagine both talk; unclear]

LG: Singing.

UW: To count. [unclear] children not to count. [unclear]. That's what we need in school. You know we need the, who discover America, who discover (- -)

LG: You uh, Denis, Denis and uh, and Jerry are your oldest son. Do you remember? He's eh, he's eh, thirty, thirty-six years old and he couldn't remember what he learned [interviewer coughs] at that, the nuns.

M: He went to the Catholic school.

LG: Yeah. [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mrs. Gagine unclear]

NG: What she's trying to say is they used to have like, eh five Great Lakes to remember like (M: Yeah) until you spell home. See, too I mean you had, (M: Right) you had [unclear] (M: Yeah)

LG: You know? [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear]

LG: And then uh, the, the, all the [unclear]. It's all different from the public school. I think they [unclear] (- -)

UW: They learned to pray.

NG: They had (- -) You know it seems that they had more patience you know with the children. (M: Oh yeah)

LG: You know Denis, Denis, not Denis, Jerry, my oldest son. The nuns slapped him across the face. He said to me, "Ma," he said, "that's the nun I like the most because she cares about me. She taught me that you don't fool around in school. That you have to learn." You know. (M: [unclear]) And, and it was much better I think. I miss the nun a lot.

M: Your, your younger kids didn't go there because (LG: No) the school was closed.

LG: Diane, Diane went four, um, I think up to the fourth grade then the nun left. She had to move, she (- -)

M: Why did the, why did the nuns leave?

LG: Because they weren't enough nuns. They had to leave the (- -)

M: Which, which one was a bigger school, the, the uh, I mean where did more (LG: They had) students go?

LG: They had eight grades over there, and they had eight grades at the public school.

NG: I'd say they had a hundred children there [unclear].

M: About the same.

LG: Yeah.

NG: About the same.

LG: But uh, you didn't hear too much about rape and sex. When they used to go to, you know, they had the nuns. You know, they were, while they were (M: Yeah, I know) praying they didn't think about (M: Yeah) other things you know.

M: I don't think you [unclear] (- -)

LG: Now they cut everything. (M: Yeah)

M: I don't think in those days you heard too much in the public school though either.

LG: Yeah. You know they didn't, you know they didn't think a-, they didn't talk too much about, oh today all you hear about is rape and sex, and rape and sex. And when they had the nuns, you know they would teach the kids a-, the good way, you know. That's why I miss, I miss the nuns. I, you know, I, I wish [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk, Mrs. Gagine unclear]

NG: Whenever there, the s-, they'd bring the kids to, to church you know. (LG: Yeah) Like the altar boys [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear]

LG: They would pray. They wou-, you know. Yeah.

M: How, how, and the (- -)

LG: And today you don't see too many of that, Peter. (M: And that) You don't see the kids go to church too much, right?

M: No, it's not the same. (LG: Huh?) It's not the same as it, as it (LG: Yeah) was I know. Ahh, h-how much of that was in French in the Catholic school?

NG: [unclear] half and half [unclear].

LG: We had French and English.

M: Half and half?

LG: Oh yeah.

M: And what subject, what subjects would they teach in French?

LG: All the subject in French and all the subject (- -)

NG: [unclear] geography.

LG: [unclear] Canada and all of that you know. Well they had English. They had a lot of English. There's only one nun, an, an old nun, she's still living (- -)

NG: Well they had patience with the kids [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear]

LG: She's about eighty. The nun that taught my kids, she's about eighty-five, something like that. Uh Claudette met her the other day at the Ponderosa. (M: Oh yeah?) And she remembered Claudette. (M: Hm) She remember me.

M: Now all, all the nuns there were, were bilingual? They could all, all speak both French and English.

LG: They speak both, but this one, that, she was a French teacher and she was French. All French. You know. Sister [unclear] they call her. And she's uh, she comes from Woonsocket. [unclear]. Her name is [unclear]. But she met at the Ponderosa. She was with her three, her two sisters. They're nuns too. They're both nuns. They were at the Ponderosa.

M: Eh, ahh, do your kids know how to speak French?

NG: They lost that.

LG: Ohh, th-, Claudette and Jerry [unclear].

M: Those are the oldest ones?

LG: Yeah, the oldest one. Like Denny. Sh-, he can defend himself. He can talk French. But when he was in California, he had to translate French (M: Oh yeah) [unclear] the guys down there.

NG: One of my kids, my, the youngest one there said he took French here like I said and all that. [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear]

LG: Pamela, Pamela took French last year. (M: Yeah) And she's going to take it again this year. She's going to take over what she did last year. Because she didn't understand too much. (M: Oh yeah) So she wants to go back to the, to what she learned last year. (M: I see) So she'll understand better. You know. That's what she wants to do.

M: Did you, d-did you raise your kids, d-did you speak French in the house or English [unclear]

LG: [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear] In the house it's always French.

NG: They answer English.

M: You talk to them in F-, so they understand it?

LG: Oh yeah, oh, it's all French, we always talk French to Pam, you, you know. Very, very (-)

M: So she understands everything.

LG: Something we talk. I u-, I'm used to French and (M: Yeah) I, you know that's what we talk in the house. Jerry talks French and Claudette talks French. And then [unclear] wants to.

UW: Little Diane.

LG: Diane, she can, she can talk French.

[Mr. Gagine and another person talk in background; unclear]

NG: That's what I'm saying to you.

LG: [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear] She can talk French. She lived four years in [unclear].

NG: I could go to the doctor's [unclear], eh the salesman at [unclear] would talk to you in French even though they were Italian or (- -) They knew French.

M: Here, here in Albion you mean.

NG: Yeah, they knew French. [Mr. Gagine and interviewer both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear]

M: Like, like the guy who ran the meat and everything spoke, spoke French?

LG: Oh yeah.

NG: [unclear] French. He'd talk [unclear] French.

M: Who, who was that?

NG: [unclear].

LG: The [unclear].

NG: They, they, they were Polish and they could t-talk better French than a lot of French [unclear]. (M: Is that right?)

LG: Yeah. Or in the house it was always French.

M: So why is it your older kids would speak better French than the younger ones?

LG: Because they went to school for eight years. (M: Oh) But Claudette went to twelfth grade. She went to St. uh, to uh, uh (- -)

NG: [unclear] Notre Dame.

LG: Notre Dame in uh Central Falls. She went up to the twelfth grade with the nuns.

M: And that was all French there, too?

LG: All French. (M: Yeah) It was French. (M: Yeah) Mostly French. (M: Yeah) And it was a Catholic school. So that's, that's why I like the Catholic school (M: Yup) because they, they learn French, and that's my language.

M: Do you think that will, ayy, do you think the language will be lost in the village in a few years like with the younger, younger generation?

LG: Yeah, because people don't want to, don't want to show their French you know. They have a French name, ohh, it's only the French name.

M: Why you, why you, what do you (- -)

LG: The, the old, when the old people dies, the French will go.

UW: Be a shame if French [unclear].

M: Why do you think the, wh-why would the young people (LG: Because) n-not want to show they're French?

LG: I don't know. The people don't want to, (NG: I think) the young people don't want to show.

NG: I think it must be TV.

LG: I don't know.

M: That probably has a lot to do with it. (LG: Yeah) [unclear].

LG: You don't see French on TV. [laughs]

M: No and everybody watches the s-, all around the country everybody watches (LG: Yeah) the same shows. (LG: Yeah)

LG: So that I think whe-, eh like uh the mass, we used to have a French mass, and now we don't have anymore of that, because of the old people. There was only the old people. Now the peoples from the back of the church and [unclear], they're all English right? So they, they want all the, [someone says something unclear in background] to get the French mass.

UW: We had one in French, [unclear]?

LG: Uh we don't, we used to have one [unclear] (- -)

UW: We have one in French.

LG: [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine both talk; Mr. Gagine unclear] We used to have one in French.

NG: (- -) Majority rules here.

UW: The old people, eh, some [unclear] can speak English.

LG: They don't [unclear] French [unclear] in French.

M: In Manville.

LG: In Manville, yeah.

M: They (- -)

LG: [unclear].

M: Well, there's, there's still some people in, in Albion who don't speak English very much.

LG: Yeah, in the morning. See we [unclear] our French in the morning. There's people from [unclear], people from [unclear] that come, so they got more power than the French. So (- -)

M: Because they're [unclear].

[Mr. Gagine talks in background; unclear]

LG: So there's more, more English than French. Like the old people you know, like, people that goes to church every day. I go to church every day.

M: But it's most-, yeah it's mostly older people who go to chur-, church (- -) [several people talk at once; unclear] But most, most, most of those people speak French who go in the, like for the daily mass, right?

LG: Yeah. So they're all (- -)

M: So how come they don't, how come he doesn't give a French mass then?

LG: They going to close the church. That's what I said. There's, all the old people that goes to church in the m-, they all understand English, so. (M: Oh) You see.

M: They all, oh, because he, he speaks French, right?

LG: Oh yeah. And then the [unclear], he's French. He speak good French.

M: You think that's important, that the priest there knows how to speak French?

NG: You can't deny it, that's like saying why don't they say the mass in Latin. Nobody knows Latin.

[unidentified woman talks in background; unclear]

LG: I know Latin.

[several people talk at once: unclear]

UW: He turn his back to the people like the old time. I'm going to go there sometime. [unclear].

[unidentified woman and Mrs. Gagine both talk; unidentified woman unclear]

LG: I don't, I don't care. It's just like eh the woman that gives communion.

Uw: It's the same thing. [unclear] (- -)

NG: [unclear].

Uw: There's the beginning of the mass. There's the first time the beginning of the mass supposed to be said your back turned to the, to the people. You're supposed to have the, the old, the old time. That's the, that's better than today because they ain't supposed to to the people. Look at the back is turned.

[several people talk at once; unclear]

LG: It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. It's just like the woman that gives communion. [unidentified woman and Mrs. Gagine both talk; unidentified woman unclear] No more. Before go-, it's funny the people in Albion you know. A woman will give communion and they're sitting on the right side. If the woman gives communion on the right side, they have changed to the left side. They go to the priest.

M: Because of the tradition you mean? Because they don't (- -)

LG: It is, the old people, right?

M: Don't think it should come from a woman.

LG: No. They don't, they don't like communion from a, a, nobody but the priest. They just

like my aunt. My aunt is ninety-, she'll be ninety-six in October. And if the, the priest comes, right and he said, "I got a lot of help you know here, a lot of women give (- -)," She said to, to him, "If you don't have time to come and give me communion, forget it. I don't want it." He said, "I'm going to send a woman." "I don't want it! (M: And that's) If you don't have time for me, forget it!"

M: And why, why do you think she says that?

LG: She's o-old fashioned. She want the priest. She don't want (- -)

UW: They're going to say pretty soon they want to like me to change, and I'm going to go up the hill and go to [unclear]. (LG: She's) What I liked about it is the mass, it's not con-, no more confessions. In general. That's it.

LG: L-like uh, like uh (- -)

UW: You go to confession they'll laugh at you. Ay, "You said, you said that sin twice. (LG: Like when) It's already forgiven." "Well Father, I don't, I only have two, three sins, right?" What am I going to say, make, make some? Go on the street to make some sins.

LG: I had to um, when a Pa-, when I had, I was going have Pamela, and when they had that eighty, eightieth anniversary for the, the parish, (M: Hm) eh Bishop uh, uh Riley was here, now he's in Connecticut, he blessed me and he said, "You're going to have a priest." So when he became a bishop I want to see him, right. So I said, "You know that little priest I'm supposed to have?" I said, "It turned out to be a little girl." [interviewer chuckles] So he looked at me, he said, "Well, by the time she' old enough maybe there'd be a woman priest."

M: Might be.

UW: Well, I won't go that time that priest's a woman.

LG: Hey! Eh, a priest is a priest.

UW: Nobody's going (- -)

LG: A woman

Uw: Hey! Hey!

LG: Or a man, I don't care.

UW: Don't go by that.

LG: Communion is the bread of (Uw: Hey!) Christ, the body of Christ.

Uw: The Apostles was only man. They not only woman. Priest, you ought to sit at the table of

twelve, Apostle. [unclear] no women in there.

LG: It doesn't matter

UW: That's the time I quit.

LG: Who gives the communion.

UW: That's the time I quit.

LG: It's the body of Christ.

UW: Oh, not me. I won't take from a woman.

LG: It's the body of Christ. It's blessed.

M: You won't take it from a woman?

UW: [unclear] had a big mouth, go tell your sins to the priest. [Mrs. Gagine laughs] She's not, they can't keep a secret.

LG: The man will do the same thing. [unidentified woman keeps talking; unclear] A man will do the same thing.

[Mrs. Gagine and unidentified woman both talk; unclear]

LG: I was walking down with my sister-in-law, and the woman was sick, right. So she turns around and she's looking and she's looking in the back. She's coming down the aisle. And then when she turns around, she hit the post with her nose, (M: Oh, right) right, [chuckling] and sh-, the nose was big. So we go to church it was um, the, the retreat you know. So we go back to church at night, and the, the priest started to say, said, "You know," he said, "curiosity is a sin." [Mrs. Gagine and interviewer chuckle] And you study the story about the woman going down the street and she turned around, she hit the post and my sister-in-law thought I told the priest. (M: Ohh) [unclear] It just happened that way (M: Yeah) right? (M: Yeah) And uh I didn't tell the priest, and I said, "I went, unnh!" And I started to laugh because he laughing too hard. [two people talk in background; unclear] Me, it doesn't matter who give the communion. I don't care if it's a man or woman. (UW: Don't go!) It's the body of (UW: Hey!) Christ and that's it [unclear].

UW: The people don't go to confession around my where I live. The, this Sunday been three years [unclear] when I been to confession.

LG: I go with tradition. I go with, you know, whatever the, the bishop comes out with you know. He's the boss. And if the Pope tells you you got to have it from a man or a woman, you go anyway. It's still, [unidentified woman talks; unclear] it's still the body of Christ to me.

M: Ehh, I was going to ask you a question about, about, changing the subject here, but thi-, this is about, about the housing. When you were born here did, did the houses all have running water and uh toilets inside?

LG: No.

NG: Naw, no toilets. And wa-, cold water.

M: Just cold water.

NG: Come from a reservoir up the hill.

LG: [interviewer and Mr. Gagine continue talking; unclear] They had, they had houses outside.

M: Which w-, which wa-, let's see, the reservoir was (- -)

NG: [unclear]. Right where the cemetery is.

M: Behind the church. And who wa-, they had outhouses? (LG: Yeah) Everybody had outhouses? When did they put in uh toilets?

LG: Nineteen

NG: Thirty

LG: Thirty-seven. I remember they were young, we used to have a house.

M: When do you think most of the, most of the houses got hot water?

LG: [pause: 3 sec.] About the same time, I guess.

NG: When they sold them.

M: When they sold them privately? Then they, they got hot water as well. What about the heating? What kind of heating did they have?

LG: Oil.

NG: They had a wooden stove.

LG: Charcoal.

M: A wood stove with that one? [Mr. Gagine says something unclear]

LG: They used to get the coal at the, next to the track.

M: Will it [Mrs. Gagine says something unclear] come in by, by train?

LG: Yeah and you know the train would go by with the coal.

NG: [unclear] poor people could afford coal. [unclear]. And then the wood, they had [rest of what he says unclear].

LG: [talks at same time as Mr. Gagine] We used to have the old days refrigerator with ice. Square ice you know. There'd be (- -)

M: Where would, where would they get the wood from?

NG: They'd go ask Harry [unclear], he'd say "Just go in the woods and get some." (M: Who was) [unclear].

M: Who was he?

NG: [response unclear]

M: And he would just let anybody, you didn't have to pay for it or anything.

NG: No. [unclear]

LG: Cut your own wood. He used to say, "Go in the wood and cut your own wood." (M: Oh) [unclear].

NG: That, that [unclear]. (M: Right)

M: And where did the, where did the ice come from?

NG: [unclear].

M: Where was this? Where was [unclear].

NG: It was on School Street.

M: Oh he had a s-, where did he (- -)

LG: The barroom. Where the barroom is.

NG: [unclear].

M: And where did he, I mean where did he make the ice? Right there?

NG: [unclear].

M: [unclear].

NG: [unclear]. (M: Oh, okay) [unclear].

M: He had ice, ice and oil both.

NG: Yeah.

M: And wh-, what was his name?

NG and LG: Pugh.

M: Pugh.

LG: Joe? Was that Joe Pugh?

NG: [unclear].

LG: Yeah his father.

M: And it was right where the, where the bar is today?

NG: [unclear].

M: As a, as a bar, or as a, as a business? Before it was a bar.

NG: No, no. He, he, he was living the house next door and he bought it [unclear]. And he went into business for himself with this barroom.

LG: Yeah. [unclear].

M: Okay. [pause: 5 sec.] And how, getting towards the end here, how would, how do you think Albion compares, a-as a place to live, compares to other places like eh, like Manville or like eh Pawtucket or Woonsocket? How does, how does Albion compare?

NG: I don't have any [unclear]. I, I, I [unclear]. I just stay home. [unclear]. I like it.

LG: [chuckles] They know everything that's going on in, in Albion.

M: Wh-, y-, you mean all the people do?

LG: Over here. You go to the corner and you find all the news.

M: [chuckles] (Uw: Uhhh) About everybody else you mean.

UW: Manville, too. (M: Yup) [two people talk in background]

LG: You tell one and first thing you know it's something else. [chuckles]

M: You think that's good or bad?

LG: [unclear] well they, it's a small place you know, everybody knows everybody else [unclear]. It depends how, how, sometime we don't, you learn other people. I know my friend died [unclear]. I work over there and I found out in the paper, on Monday. She died on Friday and I found out on Monday. (M: Oh really) So you [unclear]. Some news, you know, bad news goes fast. Good news, you know. It depends good news or bad.

M: Well, you both, you both lived here a long time so, why have you, why have you stayed here instead of going to someplace, someplace else?

LG: It's our home. You know. It's our home, and he li-, he likes it over there. It's quiet in Albion. It's not uh, like a city you know. Like Woonsocket. I wouldn't like to live in Woonsocket.

M: Because (- -)

LG: Um, I don't know.

M: Why not?

LG: It's more, more traffic and Albion is quiet. [unclear]. We had a lot of places we could have lived. [unclear]. We know most of everybody. I know more than him because he doesn't even go out.

NG: I told him [Mr. and Mrs. Gagine talk at same time, Mr. Gagine unclear]

LG: He doesn't know the kids. I told, I told Peter; that you were homebody. [interviewer chuckles] He likes to stay home. [unclear].

M: Okay, very good. Thank you very much.

[end of side one]